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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Sub-Commission on Prevention of
Discrimination and Protection
of Minorities
Forty-sixth session
Agenda item 15

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Written statement submitted by the Grand Council of the Crees (of Quebec), a non-governmental organization on the Roster

The Secretary-General has received the following communication, which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV).

[4 August 1994]

Draft declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples

1. The Grand Council of the Crees (of Quebec) requests that the Sub-Commission give full and adequate consideration to the draft declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples before sending the draft for consideration to the Commission on Human Rights. We do not consider it appropriate to rush the consideration of the draft declaration and recommend, notwithstanding Commission on Human Rights resolution 1994/29 of 4 March 1994, that it be sent for consideration to the Commission at its fifty-second session.

2. We are convinced that States have not been adequately prepared to receive the draft declaration for consideration. In this connection, we recommend that the Sub-Commission authorize the Working Group on Indigenous Populations to prepare an annotated version of the draft declaration demonstrating the progressive evolution of the draft text, and providing explanatory notes regarding the necessity for each paragraph, and alternative language which has been considered and rejected in favour of the present draft text.

3. We also recommend that the Sub-Commission request the Working Group to prepare a short summary of its findings during its past 12 sessions regarding the promotion and protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples, in order to demonstrate the substantive conditions which warrant a declaration by the United Nations to prevent discrimination against indigenous peoples.

4. The Grand Council of the Crees strongly believes that current developments in many States where indigenous peoples live could negatively affect the outcome of the declaration at this time. It is clear, however, that with sufficient preparation and explanation, and allowing in particular for greater understanding regarding the right of self-determination, that the declaration will enjoy better prospects in the next year or two.

5. The Grand Council of the Crees understands that the declaration should be approved and declared by the General Assembly at the earliest possible moment. However, adequate preparation and consideration will assure the earliest possible approval by the competent bodies of the United Nations.